

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 01923 01 OF 02 122227Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----114144 122235Z /61
O 122045Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9927

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 1923

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT MR,
SUBJ: MEETING WITH MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT MOUSTAPHA OULD MOHAMED SALEC
K

REF: A. STATE 175454, B. NOUAKCHOTT 1873

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT MOUSTAPHA OULD MOHAMED SALECK MADE A PERSONAL APPEAL FOR US GOOD OFFICES IN SEEKING PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO SAHARA CONFLICT. HE ALSO MADE PLEA FOR CONTINUED AND INCREASED ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND CLOSER POLITICAL RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT MOUSTAPHA RECEIVED ME FOR 45 MINUTES JULY 12. DRESSED AS USUAL IN HIS CAMOUFLAGE PARATROOPER FATIGUES, HE GREETED ME VERY WARMLY AND AFTER A BRIEF PERIOD OF PICTURE TAKING GOT RIGHT DOWN TO THE POINT. HE DIVIDED HIS CONVERSATION INTO THREE PARTS:
A. WHY THE COUP?
B) WHAT DOES THE NEW GOVERNMENT EXPECT TO DO?
C) CAN THE USG HELP US?

3. MOUSTAPHA STATED THAT THE TAKEOVER BY THE MILITARY COMMITTEE WAS IN FACT A QUOTE COUNTER-COUP UNQUOTE TO HEAD OFF A BLOODY REVOLUTION OF THE MASSES THAT HE AND COLLEAGUES CONSIDERED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NOUAKC 01923 01 OF 02 122227Z

OTHERWISE INEVITABLE. HE SAID THAT FORMER PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH WAS A GOOD MAN AND WELL-INTENTIONED, BUT WAS NEVER ABLE TO BRING INTO PRACTICE ANY SEMBLANCE OF SOCIAL ORDER, UNIVERSAL JUSTICE AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES. HE GAVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF OULD DADDAH'S INEPTITUDE, AND HIS GOVERNMENT'S VENALITY, THE CROWDED CONDITIONS OF NOUAKCHOTT AND OTHER URBAN CENTERS. WHY HAVE THESE MISERABLE PEOPLE FLED TO NOUAKCHOTT?

IT IS BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY HAD NO POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING ESSENTIAL SOCIAL SERVICES WHILE LIVING IN THE INTERIOR. HE CITED ENTIRE GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS THAT WERE WITHOUT MEDICAL FACILITIES AND LARGE AREAS THAT HAD NO SCHOOLS. HE CITED EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS WHO NOT ONLY HAD NO INTEREST IN PERFORMING THEIR FUNCTIONS BUT WERE ACTUALLY STEALING FROM THE MASSES. HE SAID IT APPEARED TO HIM AND HIS COLLEAGUES THAT MAURITANIA UNDER OULD DADDAH HAD BEEN DROWNING FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS AND THAT WHEN SOMEONE CANNOT SWIM HE CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF; SOMEONE ELSE HAS TO FISH HIM OUT.

4. WHAT DOES THE NEW GOVERNMENT EXPECT TO DO?

A) GET THE IRON ORE MOVING AGAIN AND INTO THE WORLD MARKET.
B) REVITALIZE AND GIVE DIRECTION TO THE ADMINISTRATION AND RESTORE THE CONFIDENCE OF BUSINESS MEN. HE WENT ON TO TALK ABOUT THE NEED TO INVITE OVERSEAS INVESTMENT AND STATED THAT HE WAS SURE THAT MAURITANIA HAD MANY FRIENDS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO ITS PROBLEMS AND READY AND WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN A FREE ECONOMY.
C) FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICT.

5. CONCENTRATING THEN ON THE THIRD ITEM, HE QUALIFIED THE REQUEST MADE BY ISMAEL OULD AMAR AS FOLLOWS:

A) REGARDING ANY USG DEMARCHE TO THE ALGERIANS, HE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NOUAKC 01923 01 OF 02 122227Z

STATED THAT HE HOPED WE WOULD SEE FIT TO TREAT THIS AS A USG SUGGESTION RATHER THAN AS THE TRANSMISSION OF A MAURITANIAN OVERTURE.

B) HE STATED HE REALIZED HE HAD A SERIOUS PROBLEM IN WEDDING HIS DESIRE FOR PEACE WITH HIS OTHER OBJECTIVE OF MAINTAINING CLOSE AND CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH MOROCCA. HE CONFIDED THAT HE HAD NO READY ANSWER AND NO SUGGESTIONS FOR US TO MAKE TO THE MOROCCANS. HE HOPED, HOWEVER, THAT WE AS THE MOST INFULENTIAL COUNTRY IN THE WORLD COULD COME UP WITH A FORMULA THAT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL CONCERNED. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NO DESIRE TO HOLD ON TO A WORTHLESS TRACT OF SAND IF ITS INHABITANTS DID NOT WISH TO BE PART OF MAURITANIA.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 01923 02 OF 02 122146Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----113385 122239Z /61
O 122045Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9928

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 1923

EXDIS

6. IN ANSWER TO MY DIRECT QUESTION, HE STATEE THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NOT TESTED ITS DESIRE TO END THE WAR WITH THE MOROCCANS, NOR HAS IT HAD ANY DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE ALGERIANS.

7. REGARDING FORMAL RECOGNITION I USED THE AUTHORITY CONTAINED IN REFTEL A.HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT NOT ONLY WOULD OUR RELATIONS CONTINUE AS THEY HAD BEFORE BUT THAT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF OUR MEETING THEY WOULD BE GREATLY EXPANDED, NOT ONLY IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WHERE WE HAVE BEEN SO HELPFUL IN THE PAST, BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF CLOSER POLITICAL COOPERATION.

8. HE WOUND UP THE MEETING WITH AN APPEAL FOR ANY ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE THAT WE AND ANY FRIENDLY NATION COULD PROVIDE. HE CONFIRMED THAT THE COUNTRY WAS ABSOLUTELY BANKRUPT AND WITHOUT HELP WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO MEET CURRENT GOVERNMENT PAYROLLS.

9. MOUSTAPHA ALSO MADE FOLLOWING POINTS DURING MEETING:
A) GOM PRIME MINISTER OSMAN DID NOT COME TO MAURITANIA AS HAD BEEN RUMORED, AND REPORTED AS SUCH IN A PREVIOUS TELEGRAM. IN FACT, VISITOR WAS A FORMER PRIME MINISTER (PRESUMABLE REDA GUEDIRA) WHO RUSHED IN IMMEDIATELY TO OBTAIN ASSURANCES THAT MAURITANIANS WOULD NOT IMMEDIATELY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NOUAKC 01923 02 OF 02 122146Z

SEEK A SEPARATE PEACE WITH THE ALGERIANS.
B) MAURITANIANS HAVE NOT ASKED THE FRENCH TO PLAY A MEDIATORY ROLE.
C) HE ASSURED ME THAT HE WAS FULLY AWARE OF OULD AMAR'S CONVERSATIONS WITH ME (REFTEL B) AND ENCOURAGED ME TO CONTINUE TO USE THIS CHANNEL.
D) ALONG WITH HIS FAREWELL HANDSHAKE HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT OUR NEXT MEETING WOULD BE SOON AND WOULD BE

AT MY INITIATIVE AFTER RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS FROM MY
GOVERNMENT.

10. COMMENT: GIVEN MOUSTAPHA'S QUALIFICATION OF OULD
AMAR'S REMARKS, BELIEVE WE SHOULD DELAY ANY APPROACH TO
ALGERIANS RE MAURITANIAN INTENTIONS UNTIL WE HAVE TAKEN
SOUNDINGS WITH MOROCCANS.
POLISARIO PROVISIONAL CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCEMENT REPORTED ON FRENCH
RADIO WOULD APPEAR TO INDICATE
WILLINGNESS ON ALGERIAN PART TO ENTER INTO SERIOUS NEGOTIA-
TIONS, AND WE SHOULD THEREFORE NOT ALLOW MAURITANIAN INITIATIVE
TO DIE ON VINE. ON OTHER HAND, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ALGERIAN
INTENTION IS SIMPLY TO SPLIT MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN ALLIANCE,
SOMETHING MAURITANIANS NATURALLY SEEK AT ALL COSTS TO AVOID.
IN SUCH A SITUATION, PREMATURE ACTION ON OUR PART WOULD
ALMOST CERTAINLY DO GRAVE DAMAGE TO OUR RELATIONS WITH
MOROCCO.

11. THUS, IT SEEMS TO US THAT WE MUST FIND OUT WHERE
MOROCCANS STAND AND THEN FOLLOW UP QUICKLY WITH MAURITANIANS.
IN DOING SO, WE WOULD BE BEGINNING TO MOVE INTO MEDIATORY
ROLE. AT THIS JUNCTURE, WE SENSE THERE IS A BASIS FOR
TAKING ON THE TASK. END COMMENT.

12. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT PASS THIS CABLE TO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NOUAKC 01923 02 OF 02 122146Z

EMBASSIES ALGIERS, MADRID, PARIS AND RABAT AND INFORM US
WHEN THIS DONE. KRYZA

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NOUAKC01923
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780286-0258
Format: TEL
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780769/aaaacgch.tel
Line Count: 203
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 80420477-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 175454, 78 NOUAKCHOTT 1873
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2035455
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT MOUSTAPHA OULD MOHAMED SALEC K
TAGS: PINT, MR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/80420477-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014